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SUBJECT: Senior Advisor for Conflict Resolution Meeting
on September 4 with Etumba and Facilitation

¶1. (SBU) Summary: General Etumba said that CNDP's participation in the Amani process was essential, but he balked at disengagement talks being held at Kimoka, noting CNDP had already agreed to an ad hoc process in Goma. International Facilitation team expressed surprise at the lack of a meeting with Nkunda and doubted the government would accept Kimoka. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) After meeting a CNDP team near Kirokirwe September 4, Senior Advisor for Conflict Resolution for the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Tim Shortley had a brief meeting with General Didier Etumba, co-chairman of the Joint Technical Commission on Peace and Security, and the commander and deputy commander of the Eighth Military Region, General Mayala and Col. Delphin, followed by a meeting with the international facilitation team and MONUC/Goma.

¶3. (SBU) Shortley told Etumba that he had just spoken to Kabila's senior counselor Tshibanda, who had requested a greater U.S. involvement, including with the CNDP, to ensure that the parties quickly got down to defining disengagement zones. Shortley said it was essential that all sides work to reduce tensions, for example by avoiding indulging in rumors that were not backed up by solid evidence (a similar position taken by the international facilitation in the Joint Monitoring Group). Disengagement was, he said, the only way to prevent the clashes that had occurred over the past ten days, and it was the essential step toward disarmament. Shortley said CNDP had committed to withdraw to positions held two weeks ago; return to disengagement, but in Kimoka (not Goma) due to security concerns; Phase 1 disarmament and integration exercise and would make a press statement to that effect. Disengagement in areas of FDLR presence would, however, present difficulties but could be achieved through the Nairobi process.

¶4. (SBU) Etumba responded that, as for the government, it would do everything within its power to reduce tensions, which were, indeed, quite high. CNDP was awaited in the peace process at every moment. CNDP was essential to that process, and Etumba was glad that CNDP had agreed to return to disengagement talks. Etumba said that CNDP had a greater weight than other groups, although the others could not be excluded. However, Etumba said, he was concerned at Shortley's mention of Kimoka. CNDP had agreed ten days earlier to participate in technical work on disengagement in ad hoc groups in Goma, while now it appeared to want yet a different arrangement. Shortley said that, after the clashes of the past week, CNDP was afraid to come to Goma even with MONUC escort. He urged Etumba to press for confidence-building measures such as release of CNDP political prisoners. Etumba presented Shortley with a photograph of soldiers in purportedly Rwandan uniforms killed the previous day at Ntamugenga (south of Rutshuru) saying that it was "proof of Rwandan support for the CNDP." Shortley said he would present it to Rwandan officials in Kigali the next day (see Kigali reporting). Etumba declined to attend the follow-on meeting with the facilitation team/MONUC.

¶5. (SBU) Following Shortley's debrief to MONUC and the

international facilitation, French diplomat Bernard Sexe gave voice to general surprise that Nkunda had not shown up at Shortley's meeting in Kirokirwe. "You met with the same lower-level CNDP people we have been seeing repeatedly in Goma or Kimoka, who are now backing off on their agreement to meet in Goma?" Shortley explained that both military and civilians were present to include Nkunda's security officer John Muhire and that Nkunda was reportedly in Gungu. Sexe charged that "CNDP is making fools of us and are not to be trusted." British diplomat Tom Pravda asked for clarification on CNDP's insistence on Kimoka (where the CNDP has failed to live up to its promise to withdraw its forces four kilometers to the north and ensure a neutral zone acceptable to the government). Shortley explained that CNDP has refused to come to Goma because of hostile environment and threat posed to their personnel. Shortley stated that CNDP could still disengage from Kimoka and that it would suffice as an interim site to get the disengagement discussions moving until the situation calmed. Pravda characterized the CNDP's insistence on Kimoka as a major backsliding from the previous week.

16. (SBU) Eastern Coordinator Alpha Sow said that both sides appeared to have soured on the Goma process. The trend in Kinshasa was increasingly hardline (including Etumba), impatient to finish with the CNDP by December. Sow charged that Etumba behaved as if he were commander of the 8th military region rather than co-chair of the technical commission. CNDP wanted direct dialogue, to which the government was inflexibly opposed. Sow's deputy, M'hand Ladjouzi, added that it appeared that the government was using every means at its disposal (including stirring up the populace to block, stone, and demonstrate against North Kivu brigade) to pressure MONUC into a more aggressive military stance against CNDP. He did not believe that the government was prepared to participate honestly in any

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disengagement negotiations. Shortley recommended that MONUC put observers directly with the 8th military region and with CNDP and that it formalize a structure for ceasefire violation monitoring. North Kivu brigade commander Brigadier General Bipin Rawat said that the brigade already had means of observing and communicating in the event of violations, with each side always laying entire blame on the other. The real problem, he said, was the absence of effective means of punishing violators.

GARVELINK